

## "Prelude to an Apocalypse: Landscape in an Era of Diminished Expectations" at Pedersen Projects

by christopher michno

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*Ineluctable*

2010

Lisa Adams

Oil and spray paint on panel

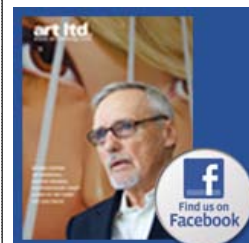
36" x 30"

Photo: courtesy Pedersen Projects

Cataclysmic visions and predictions of "the end" have been part of our collective memory for millennia. Tapping into this portentous energy with varying degrees of urgency, irony, and detachment, four artists--Lisa Adams, Amir H. Fallah, Wendell Gladstone, and Greg Rose--serve up moody reflections of angst in "Prelude to an Apocalypse" at Pedersen Projects.

In her trio of paintings, *A Morass of Contradiction*, *Ineluctable*, and *Privilege Entails Responsibility*, Lisa Adams oscillates between loose, expressionistic brushwork that offers the slightest indication of an object, and meticulously rendered depictions of nature. Adams heightens the pictorial fragmentation in these works by painting over and into each surface with interlocking rectangular shapes of varied degrees of opacity. In doing so, she literally obliterates the underlying images, obscuring trees, grass, and sky with a single swipe--gone forever.

Fallah's funky and cacophonous mixed media works, *An Altar For Your Life, For Your Death* and *Terminated*--each a hybrid of collage, watercolor, acrylic, ink, and graphite on paper mounted to canvas--incorporate the detritus and follies of popular culture, and the gravity of *memento mori*. The tactility of Fallah's work--the porous quality of paper reveals transparent washes of watercolor and acrylic--creates a sensuousness that camouflages the frenetic nature of his paintings, which are studded with roughly painted globs and masses of acrylic. Wendell Gladstone's narratives, synthesized for multiple sources, have a way of becoming intricately woven puzzles, full of disparate references and esoteric connections. Sanguine, which is no exception, offers a view of Gladstone's highly sculptural approach to painting. Greg Rose's idealized landscapes, *Bedford Land* and *Arcadia*, immediately suggest artifice. Built





up in layers of color-saturated oil and alkylid like sheets of taffy, the carefully balanced works approach bas relief. The idealization induces coolness and queasiness at once. The oddity of these landscapes, bereft of people, yet full of manicured hedges, is that while they lack the chaos of nature, their visual serenity still manages to create a sense of displacement.

If our great myths tell stories of destruction, they invoke the possibility of new beginnings. If we find the acceptance of our impending death in *Fallah*, Adams offers the chance of a new start. *Ineluctable* and *A Morass of Contradiction* both present improbably puffy seed clouds at the end of young green shoots.

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